

shape a generation of American defense policies and budgets, culminating in the decisive bottom-up review of our military strategy, which he conducted as Secretary of Defense.

Les Aspin was unique. He brought the light of his joy in living and the heat of his intellect to every occasion. He never met a person who didn't like him. And we all will miss him.

Remarks on Signing the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 May 22, 1995

Thank you very much. Mr. Bersoff, thank you for your comments and for the outstanding example of the family business you have built to such a remarkable extent. Thank you, Sally Katzen.

Before I begin, as a matter of personal privilege, I would just like to say a brief word about the death of my good friend Les Aspin. Hillary and I grieve his loss, and along with all other Americans, we thank him for the remarkable service he rendered to our country as a distinguished Congressman from Wisconsin, as the chairman of the Armed Services Committee of the House, as Secretary of Defense, and as head of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. He did a lot of work to keep us safe through a turbulent time, and we are all very, very much in his debt.

Let me thank the Members of Congress who are here. You know, I've got to say, I was sitting here listening to Mr. Bersoff talk, and I thought, it'll be a miracle if we get this on the news tonight, because this is something we did without anybody fighting. *[Laughter]* And the real reason this languished around for 5 years was because nobody was fighting anybody else about it. And after I got here, I discovered some of the best ideas in Washington were not being implemented simply because there was no anger attached to them. It's a sad thing to say, but it's absolutely right.

And so, sometimes energy is not behind things that hang around here for years, because there's no real brutal conflict. And in that context, I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here for overcoming all the inertia against consensus—*[laughter]*—and actually passing a bill that everybody was for. And I thank you. I thank Senators Nunn, Roth, and Glenn; Representatives Meyers, Sisisky, Peterson, and Davis, all of whom are here; and of course, former Congressman Horton and former

Senator, now Governor, Lawton Chiles for the work that they have done.

This is a remarkable bill, and I want to talk about what it does. But first, let me say that for a bill in which there was not a lot of opposition, there was an awful lot of support and input about exactly how to do this. People all over our country, big and small businesses, organizations from the National Governors' Association to the National Association of Towns and Townships to librarians actually testified in favor of this bill—what we ought to do and how it ought to be done.

The legislation recognizes that the private sector is the engine of our prosperity, that when we act to protect the environment or the health of our people, we ought to do it without unnecessary paperwork, maddening redtape, or irrational rules.

We have to reform our regulatory system in ways that protects the larger public interest without strangling business. These changes reflect the right way to reform Government. It is very consistent with the things that I believe need to be done. In the last 2 years, we have already reduced the size of the Federal bureaucracy by more than 100,000 employees, going down under existing budgets to a reduction of more than 272,000. And if the last few weeks are any indication, we're about to reduce the Government some more.

This Paperwork Reduction Act helps us to conquer a mountain of paperwork that is crushing our people and wasting a lot of time and resources and which actually accumulated not because anybody wanted to harm the private sector but because we tend to think of good ideas in serial form without thinking of how the overall impact of them impacts a system that is very dynamic and very sensitive to emerging technologies but which Government does not always respond to in the same way.

I want to say again how much I appreciate the work that Sally Katzen and her shop have done. And I want to thank the Congress for enabling them to continue on the job.

In recent months, some others have made similar announcements. Carol Browner, at the EPA, announced that she would cut the paperwork requirements of the EPA on the private sector by 25 percent. To give you an idea of what that means, that is 20 million hours of labor a year.

We often debate here what we can give the American people. We're about to have a debate: Should we give the American people more funds for education, more funds for Medicare, or more money back in a tax cut? But nothing is more precious, I see as I get older, than your own time. And for a Government to give the American people back, at no cost to the public interest, 20 million hours, is an extraordinary gift and worth a great deal of money and additions to the quality of life.

The FDA is going to dramatically speed approvals of many different kinds of medical devices. The SBA has reduced the inch-thick loan form applications to one page.

Here are some other places we will cut. The Department of Agriculture so far has eliminated the need for more than 3 million pages of Government forms from a quarter million farmers. The Department of Energy took these 3 big binders here, filled with reporting requirements, and sliced them to 11 pages—11 pages from those 3 big binders. That saved \$48 million a year, but it also gave the gift of time back to the people who were subject to it.

The Department of Education required both parents to sign a student loan and other financial aid forms. This is impossible in some cases when the noncustodial parent is not available. In lots of homes today, it's hard for both parents to be in the same place at the same time anyway. Now, one parent's signature is all that's required.

So far, we have eliminated the forms represented in this large stack of papers here on the table. When you count all the people and all the businesses that have to fill out the forms already eliminated, in one year, we've eliminated paper that would stretch end to end from Washington, DC, to San Francisco, California.

To further reduce these burdens, I have directed our agencies to continue to review their regulations, to eliminate the outdated and

streamline the bloated. I have also directed them, whenever possible, to cut in half the frequency of reports they require from citizens. For example, if they ask for quarterly reports, why don't we just have them twice a year instead?

As we reform, we need not compromise the quality of life or the needed oversight from the Government. But the truth is, we can actually improve the system by making it less hidebound and by innovating as Americans are innovating.

Today I want to add another dimension to this effort: From this point forward, I want all of our agencies to provide for the electronic submission of every new Government form or demonstrate to OMB why it cannot be done that way. The old way will still be available, but I think once people see how fast and efficient electronic filing can be, we'll see less paperwork and more of these. So, we're trying to do our part to act in good faith the way these Members of Congress intended the executive branch to act.

As you know, these little things store incredible volumes of information—incredible. My daughter knows more about it than I do, but I'm learning myself, just in the things that we do, incredibly how much more we can do and at a tiny fraction of the space involved, not to mention the speed. So the more we use electronic transmissions, the more we'll all be working quicker and smarter, giving better service to the American public, a more efficient Government, and far, far less paperwork.

I want to say again, the remarkable thing about this effort was that at the time we actually got it through the Congress, there was not a single dissenting vote. But very often the things we do not do in life are the things we all know we should do. That is a principle that extends beyond this bill.

And we owe a great debt of gratitude to the Members of Congress, especially those here present, who exercised the leadership to get this done, as well as to Governor Chiles and former Congressman Horton for the work they did to pave the way. So I would like to ask the Members to come up while we sign the bill, and Congressman Horton and Governor Chiles to come up as well. Please come up, and we'll do it.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the President signed the bill.]

Thank you very much. We're adjourned. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his

remarks, he referred to Ed Bersoff, president and chief executive officer, BTG, Inc. S. 244, approved May 22, was assigned Public Law No. 104-13.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Trade With Romania *May 19, 1995*

To the Congress of the United States:

I hereby transmit a report concerning emigration laws and policies of the Republic of Romania as required by subsections 402(b) and 409(b) of Title IV of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended ("the Act"). I have determined that Romania is in full compliance with the criteria in subsections 402(a) and 409(a) of the Act. As required by Title IV, I will provide the Congress

with periodic reports regarding Romania's compliance with these emigration standards.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 19, 1995.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 23. The related memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's News Conference *May 23, 1995*

The President. Good afternoon. I want to speak with you today about legislation that Congress is considering which would place new restrictions on how America conducts its foreign policy and slash our budget in foreign affairs. I believe these bills threaten our ability to preserve America's global leadership and to safeguard the security and prosperity of the American people in the post-cold-war world. The world is still full of dangers but more full of opportunities, and the United States must be able to act aggressively to combat foreign threats and to make commitments and then to keep those commitments. These bills would deprive us of both those capabilities.

Supporters of the bills call them necessary cost-cutting measures. But in reality, they are the most isolationist proposals to come before the United States Congress in the last 50 years. They are the product of those who argue passionately that America must be strong and then turn around and refuse to pay the price of that

strength or to give the Presidency the means to assert that strength.

The price of conducting our foreign policy is, after all, not very high. Today, it's slightly more than one percent of the budget. Let me say that again: slightly more than one percent of the budget. That's about one-fifteenth of what Americans think it is, according to the most recent surveys. And it's only one-fifth of what Americans believe would be about the right amount to spend.

In other words, we don't spend 15 percent of the budget on foreign policy, or even 5 percent, but just a little over one percent. And that one percent, which includes our contributions to the multilateral development banks, helps to dismantle nuclear weapons, saves lives by preventing famines, immunizing children, and combating terrorists and drug-traffickers. Bills in both the House and the Senate place new restrictions on our ability to meet these dangers as well as to take advantage of all the opportunities that are out there for the United States.